CLAIMS

1.   A vehicle driver's fatigue evaluating method for quantitatively calculating a degree of fatigue of a driver seated on a seat (1) based on an amount of rearward deflection of a lower part of a backrest portion (2) of the seat (1), a load applied downward to a front part of a seating portion (3) of the seat (1), and a load applied rearward to an upper part of the backrest portion (2), in a state of the driver being seated on the seat (1).

2.   A vehicle driver's fatigue evaluating method as defined in claim 1, wherein the degree of fatigue of the driver seated on the seat (1) is calculated quantitatively by using an operational expression determined by a statistical technique.

3.   A vehicle driver's fatigue evaluating method as defined in claim 2, wherein said operational expression is obtained by a multiple regression analysis with the amount of rearward deflection of the lower part of the backrest portion (2), the load applied downward to the front part of the seating portion (3) and the load applied rearward to the upper part of the backrest portion (2) regarded as explanatory variables, and an actual degree of fatigue measured of the driver seated on the seat (1) as a response variable.

4.   A vehicle driver's fatigue evaluating method as defined in claim 3, wherein said actual degree of fatigue is derived from a viscoelastic property of waist muscles of the driver seated on the seat (1).

5.   A vehicle seat evaluating method for evaluating the seat (1)

with the degree of fatigue calculated by the vehicle driver's fatigue evaluating method defined in any one of claims 1 to 4.

6. A vehicle seat evaluating apparatus comprising:

5   a first detecting device for detecting an amount of rearward deflection of a lower part of a backrest portion (2) of a seat (1), a second detecting device for detecting a load applied downward to a front part of a seating portion (3) of the seat (1), and a third detecting device for detecting a load applied rearward to an upper

10   part of the backrest portion (2), in a state of the driver being seated on the seat (1);

        a calculating device for quantitatively calculating a degree of fatigue of the driver seated on the seat (1) based on detection values of said first, second and third detecting devices; and

15   an evaluating device for evaluating the seat (1) by the degree of fatigue calculated by said calculating device.